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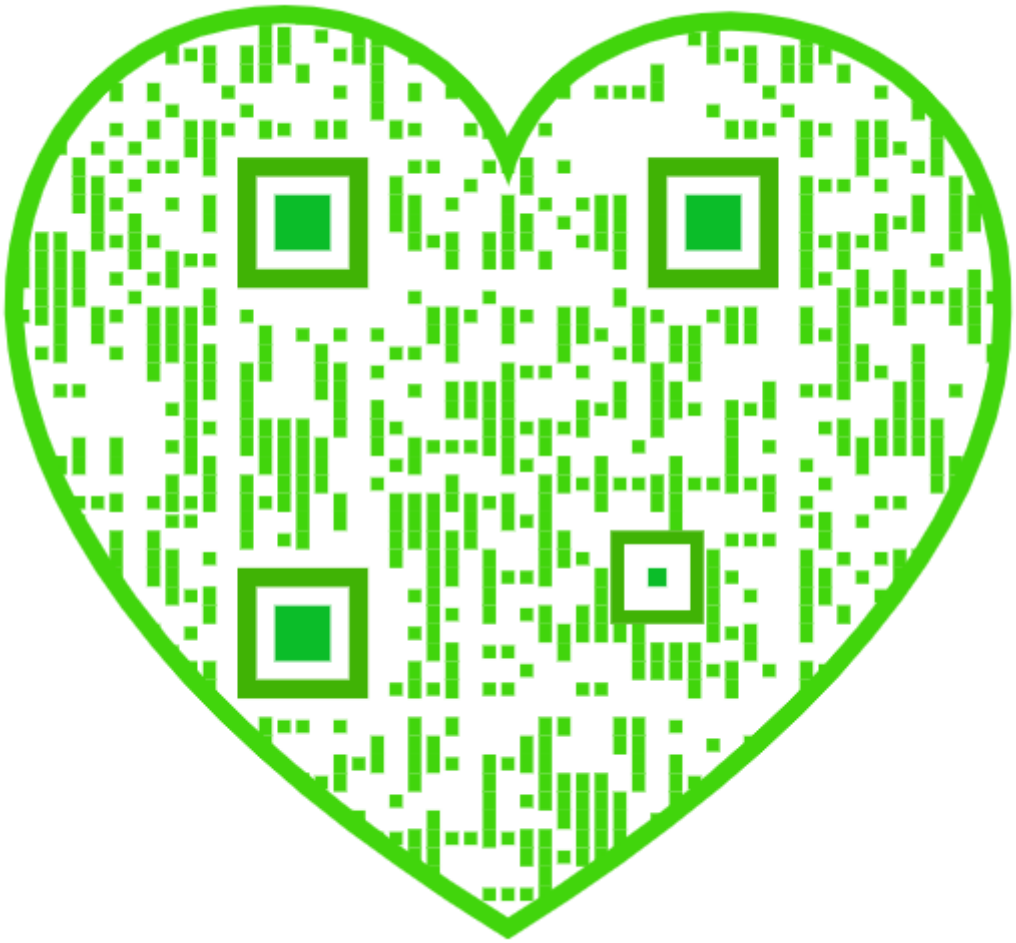
"How to Sew"



HOW TO SEW

Manual of HAND SEWING
teaching ALL VARIETIES
of HAND STITCHES
used in DRESSMAKING

PRICE, 25 CENTS

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Used in connection with their Courses in Dressmaking

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The Masterpiece

My mother cut it out for me,
And started it so I could see;
And then she turned some edges in
And let me take it to begin.
I made it. But I did not know
How very hard it is to sew.
I took a long time for that stitch,
And now it's there, I don't know which
Is better; but not one is small.
And they are not alike at all.
That side was very hard to fix;
And then the needle always pricks,
And you must hold it and take care,
Because the point is always there;
And knots keep coming, by and by;
And then, no matter how you try,
The thread comes out of its old eye;

. . . . .

But somehow, now I have it done,
I think it is a pretty one.

This Book contains complete instruction on all manner of hand stitching that can possibly be used in dressmaking or plain work of any kind

Position

Sewing does not require anyone to sit in a stooped or cramped position as that is injurious to the health and besides very ungraceful and is apt to cause round shoulders. Have your chair drawn up to the table and then SIT WELL BACK IN IT and hold your work so that you will hardly have to stoop your head. If you wish your material to be held firmly do not fasten it to your knee but fasten it to something on the table or put a heavy weight on it. It is really better to have it fastened higher than your sewing.

Needles

Always buy good quality of needles so that they will not bend or break. For white work use long fine needles or half long needles. There are special needles made for millinery and embroidery. Never use a needle that is too large as fine stitches cannot be made with it. No. 8 and 9 are good for ordinary sewing and No. 7 for basting.

Thread

Do not use too coarse thread. Always thread your needle with the end of the thread that you break off next the spool to prevent knotting. Do not use too long a thread but just about the length of your arm from shoulder to the fingers. Break the thread off from the spool but cut it at all other times, never bite or break it. Always have a pair of small scissors handy for this purpose.

Knots

When used, knots must be made very small making them by twisting the thread at the end only once. Be careful not to let any knots show in your work as nothing looks so untidy. If the knots cannot be well hidden, do not use them, but catch your thread by making two small QUICK over hand stitches, one on top of the other. In hemming, knots can always be used as they can be well covered. In basting, use knots and always leave them on the outside so that they can be easily pulled out.

Scissors

Scisssors should always be kept sharp, never dull or rusty If possible, have two or three different sizes of scissors, as in cutting heavy cloth you will have to have a very large pair and for lighter work they would be too clumsy. Button-hole scissors are a great help in keeping button-holes even, if there are a number to work.

Cloth

Cloth is a fabric that is woven from cotton, wool, linen or silk, forming materials of all kinds and description. The threads in the cloth running lengthwise are called the warp and those running crosswise are called the woof. Garments should always be cut lengthwise of the goods. Cloth is always woven straight but in pressing is frequently drawn out of shape. The way to

find the straight of the cloth so as to be able to cut it out on the straight is to ravel off some of the thread until you come to one that pulls straight across, and even though it looks uneven to you it can be straightened by stretching it on the bias, and, if wool, dampening and pressing; if cotton, washing.

Selvage

The selvage of any kind of material should always be cut off (except for a long plain seam or for joining ruffles,) especially in wool as it is apt to make seams pucker. In working with white flannel always cut off the colored selvage.

Position of Hands and Work

This cut shows the position of the hands, work and needle in doing the plain running stitch. Hold the

work straight and tight between the two hands, having the needle held in the right hand and make the stitches with a slight movement, and pushing the needle with

the side of the thimble, not the top. Use a free wrist exercise and take as many stitches on the needle at a time as possible. Practice this position over and over again until you can do it with great ease and rapidity, as in this way the eye and the hand will become so familiar with the work that they will be able to make stitches of equal length (which is of great importance in sewing) without even looking at the sewing.

Running Stitch

The running stitch is the simplest of all and is used in plain seams, when there is not much strain on the goods such as joining light material, making pleats, tucks, gathering, running fancy braid on, and cording.

Back Stitch

This stitch is used in all seams that have to be sewed very firmly and takes the place of machine stitching and therefore has to be done very evenly and in a straight line. To do this take a stitch backward on the upper side of the material and twice as long on the under side, putting it in exactly the same point where it was drawn out from the preceding stitch.

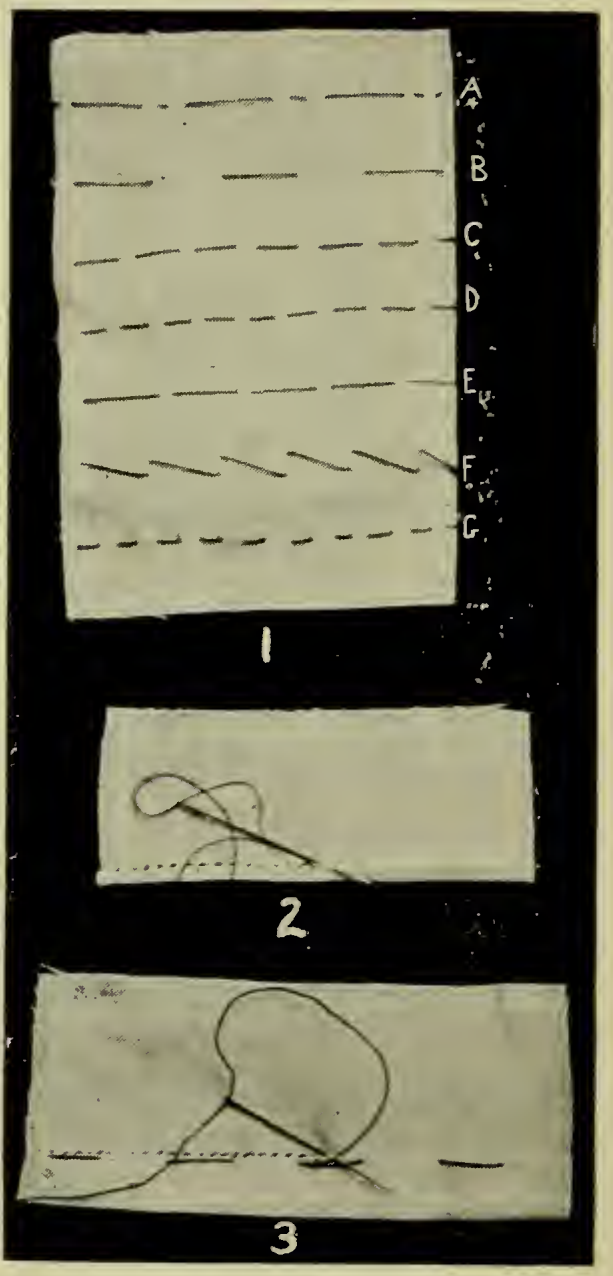
Half Back Stitch

This stitch is used in place of back stitch where there is any great thickness of material to sew through such as pleats or gathering of any kind to hold them in place.

It is made the same as the back stitch only taking the stitch one half back and making it represent a running stitch on the right side. Be sure and keep these stitches even.

Basting

Is used to prepare cloth for sewing. Figure 1 represents different styles of basting to be used at different times. In ordinary basting use coarse cotton, number forty, as fine cotton is apt to cut the goods. In basting silk and velvet use silk as cotton will leave a mark. When taking basting out, clip the thread every few inches and then pull it out. Never pull it out all in one thread. Be very careful about this when handling silk or any fancy material as it is apt to pull out some of the threads in the cloth or mar the silk. Never stitch into line of basting. There are three different kinds of basting—REGULAR, IRREGULAR AND CROSSWISE. When the goods want to be held very firmly, if it is coarse material, use the style of basting represented by "c" and "e," and if it is fine material use "d," for long seams and for hems use "a" and "b," for basting up waist linings use "g," and for basting canvas use "f." Use a knot to begin with and have the knot on the right side of the goods, and when you fasten it off take two stitches, one on top of the other. Practise these different bastings until you become familiar with each different one, using them at the right time.



BASTING AND HEMS

Hems

A hem is a finishing of a piece of cloth by turning it down twice. The first crease should be just as narrow as you can make it; usually about one-eighth of an inch wide. The second crease can be any desired width according to what style of work you are doing. Seams or stripes should come under themselves in any style of a hem.

Rolled Hem

FIG. 2 represents a rolled hem. This hem need not be basted, as it is so narrrow, but roll it along as you sew it, holding the needle in the position that is represented in the figure. Slant your stitches and be very careful to get them even and as small as possible. Be careful not to let them show on the right side.

Narrow Basted Hem

FIG. 3.—This figure represents a hem one-fourth of an inch wide and therefore it should be basted. Otherwise the hem is done just the same as the rolled hem.

Faced Hem

FIG. 4.—This figure represents a faced hem and is used when there is not enough material to make a genuine hem. It is made by adding a piece the desired width of

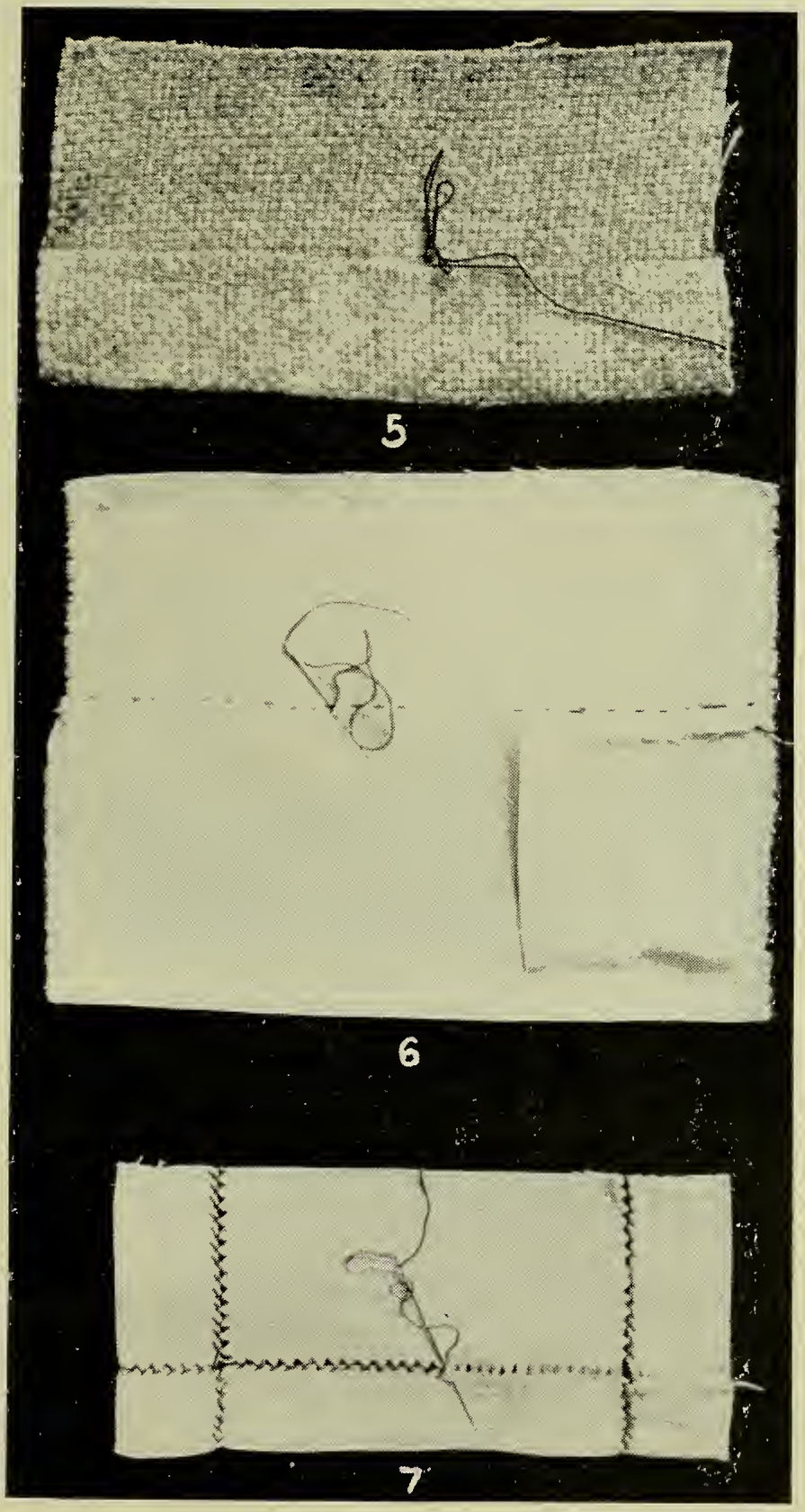
the hem on to the edge of the goods and then hemming the piece back.

Slip Stitch Hem

Fig. 5.—This figure represents the Slip Stitch Hem and is used only in woolen, silk or velvet material where the stitches are not supposed to show on either side. First baste your hem then fasten your thread under the first fold. Take one or two stitches on the first fold of the hem, then a little farther on one or two stitches on the cloth, being careful to keep the stitches straight with the threads of the cloth so that they will not show.

Extension Hem

Fig. 6.—This figure represents the Extension Hem and is used when there is not enough material for the


5
6
7

whole width of the hem. Add a piece to the edge of the goods twice as wide as you want your hem to be. Sew on in a seam on the wrong side of the goods and hem down over the seam.

Hemstitching

Fig. 7.—This figure represents hemstitching. First draw the threads and then baste the hem down even with the outer thread that you have drawn. Hide your knot between the folds of the hem, always working from left to right, then take your needle and put it under a cluster of threads being careful to bring the needle over the thread so as to form a loop to catch the cluster, together, then take a plain slanting stitch between clusters so as to hold the loop firmly and then proceed with the next cluster in the same way. Always be careful to take the same number of threads in a cluster so that the hemstitching will look even.

Table Linen Hem

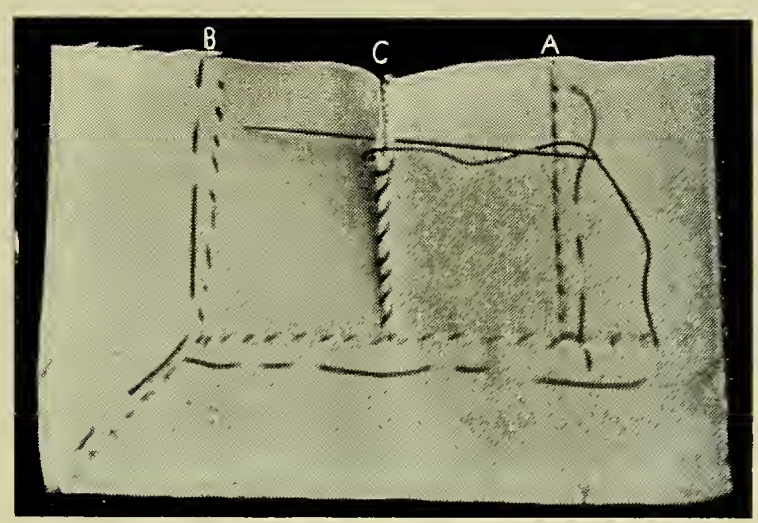
First draw a thread to be sure that your linen is straight and then prepare hem the same as in figure three. When you have this all basted down crease the linen back even with the inner edge of the hem and over hand the two folded edges. Take out basting and press seam flat. (For overhanding see page 18.)

Corners

"A" and "B" in Figure 7½ represent two different ways of finishing corners. A represents a square corner.

To do this, turn the corner even with the edge and then overhand it along the edge. "B" represents a bias corner. Have the join on the bias, right through the center of the corner and then hem it down. Cut off some

FIGURE 7½



of the goods in the center or else the material would have to be turned in too far to get the join on the bias and that would make the corner clumsy. "C" represents an overhand seam and for description see page 16.

Seams

A seam is where two pieces of cloth are joined. The running seam is the simplest of all. (See cut on position of hands page 7.) Figures 8 and 9 represent four different ways of finishing and making seams.

French Seam

"A" represents a French Seam. To do this take a narrow seam on the right side of the goods as near to the edge as possible, trim off that side and turn the goods over and make a seam on the wrong side. Be careful to take the seam deep enough to cover the raw edge.

Seam with Edges Overcast

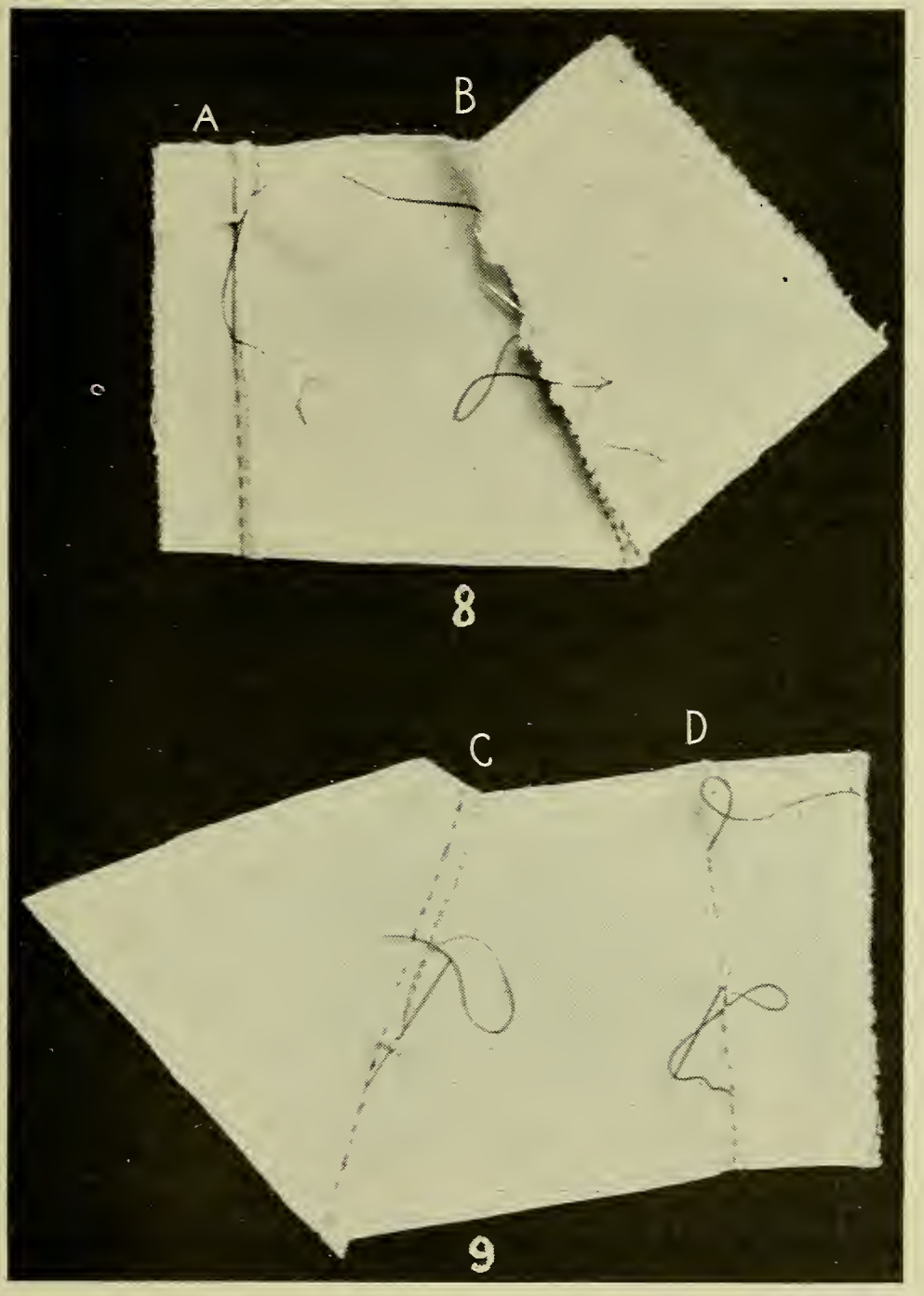
"B" represents a plain seam with the raw edges overcast. Use the running stitch for this seam. The two edges may be overcast together or pressed open and overcast separately. Overcasting is a diagonal stitch worked from left to right, and is used to prevent the raw edges of a seam from fraying out. The stitches need not be made very small but keep them even. When neatly done in colored silk it makes a very pretty finish and can be used in a great number of places in doing dressmaking.

Felled Seam

"C" represents a felled seam. After the plain seam is sewed, trim off one side and hem the other side down flat on to the goods.

Hemmed Seam

"D" represents a hemmed seam. Place the two edges of the goods that you are joining together so that


A
B
8
C
D
9

one projects about one-fourth of an inch more than the other. Make your seam then turn the projecting edge down over the other edge and hem back on to the two thicknesses of material. This seam does not lie flat but resembles a French Seam.

Overhanding Seam

Overhanding is used when a flat seam is desired. (See letter "c" in Figure 7½.) It is similar to overcasting only the stitches are made very small, and are worked from right to left. It is used to join selvages together in seams and making ruffles. It is very handy in joining material that has any kind of a figure as in using the overhand stitching the figures can be easily matched. It is also used to join two folded edges in place. In basting the seam for overhanding be careful and get the sides even. Baste the edge as near as possible. In overhanding lace on be careful to catch each mesh of the lace in the stitches.

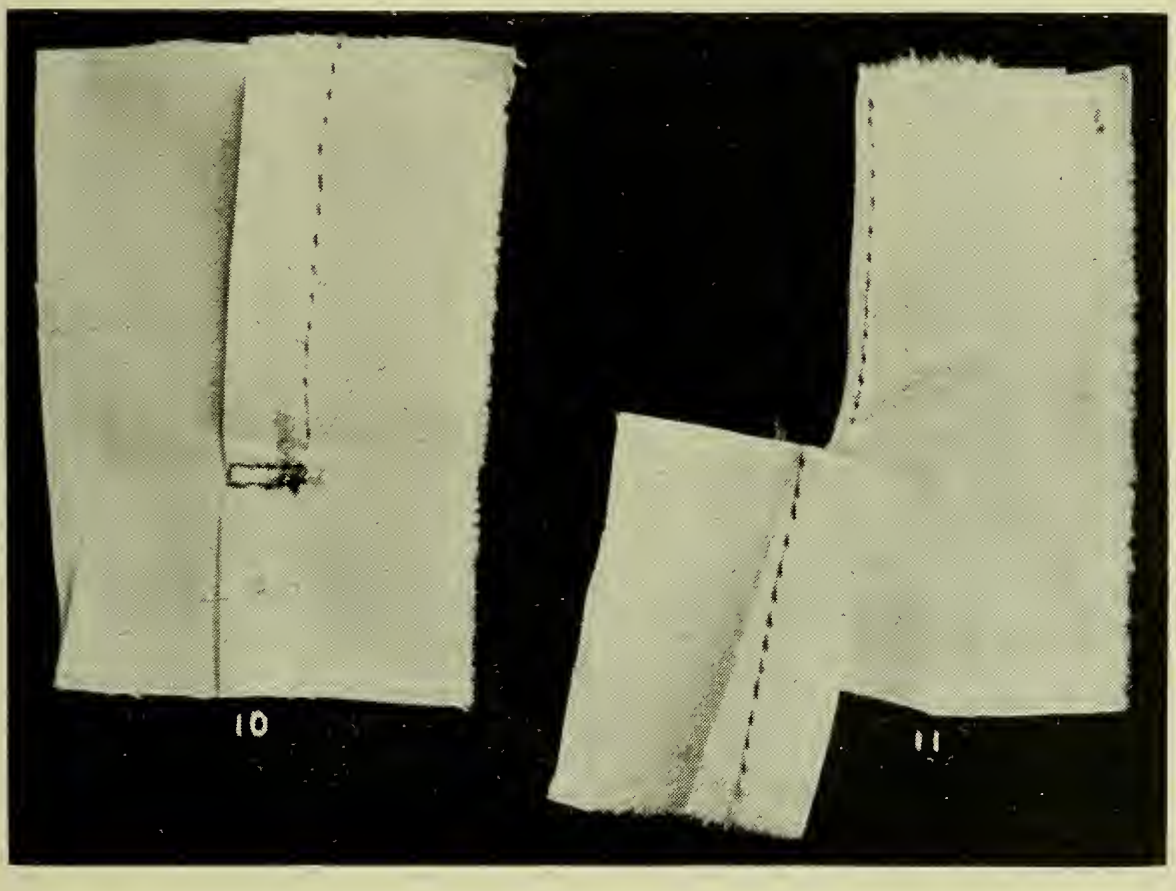
Placket

A placket is an opening made in a garment.

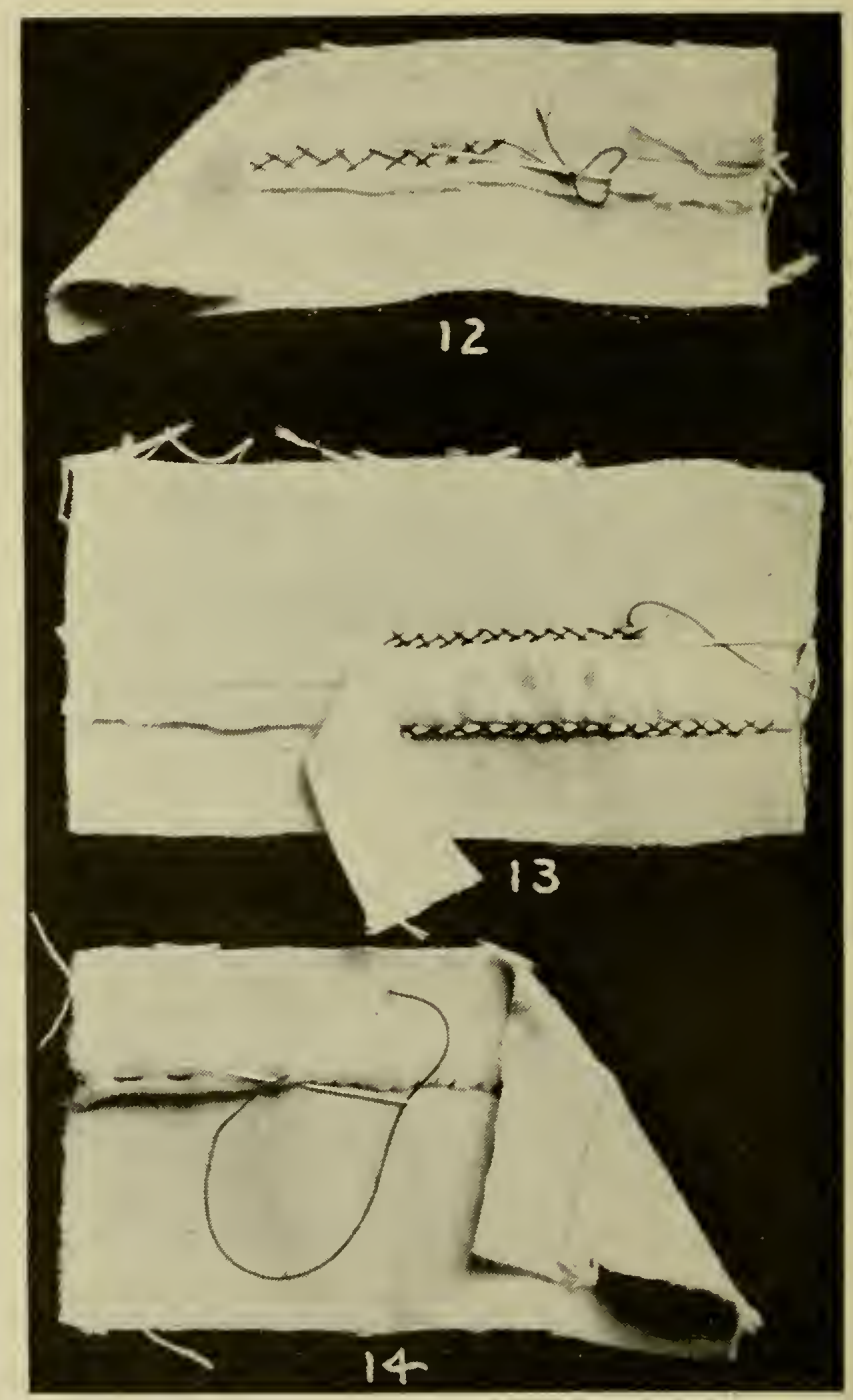
Fig. 10 represents the style of a placket usually used in underclothes. Fig. 11 is the placket pulled down so as to show the way it is hemmed or faced. Plackets also can be made with an extension added on to the under side, usually cut the width of hem. Face the outer side back with a piece of its own goods and then backstitch them together at the bottom same as Fig. 10.

Flannel Seams

FIG. 12 represents a plain flannel seam finished with cat-stitching. Sew your seam, press open and cat-stitch along the inside to hold the seam flat.



Work your cat-stitching from you, holding the material over left fore finger. Be sure and keep your stitches even as they show on the right side. For cat-stitching see page 27.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14

Covered Flannel Seam

Fig. 13 represents a covered seam. To do this, stitch your seam on the right side of the goods, then open and press and baste your ribbon down over the seam on the right side, being careful to keep all edges of the seam beneath the ribbon. Then cat-stitch the ribbon down on both sides. Make the cat-stitching small as it gives the seam a better appearance.

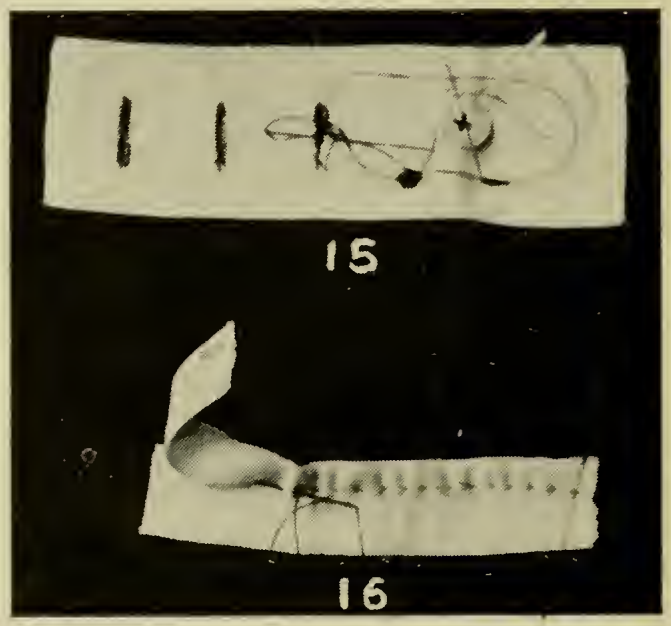
Felled Flannel Seam

Fig. 14 is a felled seam and is done the same as "C" in Fig. 9, and is a very useful seam in finishing off flannel goods as it prevents any rough edges.

Buttonholes

Fig. 15 represents button-holes. Cut your button-hole the desired size. Overcast it around the edge to stay it. Commence working from the inner end so as to have the strong unbroken part where the strain comes. Always use a stouter thread for button-holes. Fasten the thread by a few stitches on the edge of the button-hole and then draw the needle at right angles to button-hole and away from edge of hole. (Notice position of needle in figure.) Throw thread over needle from right to left, drawing the needle through the loop. Always work your button-hole from right to left. Be careful to keep your stitches even and do not draw the

thread too tight. Another way to stay a button-hole before working it is to hide the knot between the goods in the inner corner of button-hole. Draw thread out and run it to outer edge of button-hole making one long stitch full length of button-hole on upper side. Take short horizontal stitch about one-eighth inch long having stitch go on under side in front of button-hole.



Bring thread out and carry it back in one long parallel stitch on outer side, making both sides alike. Then make another small horizontal stitch so as to bring your needle out where you started from. The object is to strengthen the button-hole and make a little heavier edge. Then proceed to work the button-hole as described above.

Eyelet

Take several stitches over and over in the same place, leaving them just a little bit loose and then button-hole-stitch them together so as to form a loop. When you want an invisible fastening use this eyelet. Another way to make an eyelet is to make a very small hole right through the goods and then over hand it as closely as you possibly can so as to make it very firm. This eyelet is not used very much.

Buttons

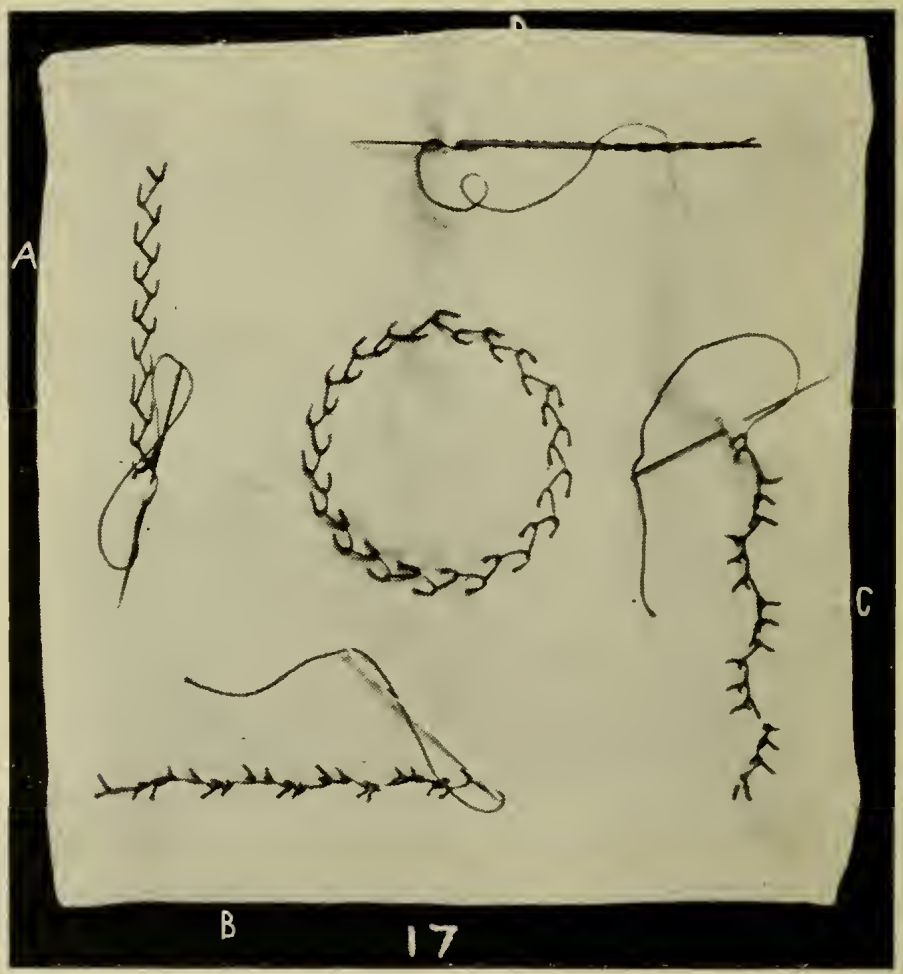
In sewing on buttons, instead of starting on the wrong side so that your knot will show, start on the right side, by taking a small stitch, leaving the knot on the right side so it will come under the button. Now place the button on the material laying a pin crossways over the button. Use strong thread or silk for sewing on the buttons, sewing over the pin from hole to hole. If there are four holes in the button make a neat cross, and if only two just go over and over Never use a double thread as it is apt to knot and break. Fill the holes in the button with as many stitches as they can hold, remove the pin and the button will give slightly. Put your needle down through one of the holes of the button then wind it around several times and fasten the thread.

Binding Seams

FIG. 16 on page 22 represents seam binding. For this purpose use the regular ribbon seam binding. Hold

the ribbon down over the edge of the seam while you sew it on. Use a running stitch making the stitches small.

Fancy Stitches



Feather Stitch

Feather stitching is a fancy stitch and can be used in all manner of ways to decorate garments. Fig. 17

represents three different ways of feather stitching. To form this stitch start at the furthest point from you and bring the needle up from beneath, then take a short stitch toward the line along which you are working, slanting this stitch somewhat towards you, and throw the silk under the point of the needle drawing the needle through. The second stitch is on the opposite side of the line and slant it so that it will be the reverse of the one just taken and make it the same as the other stitch. This stitching is represented by "a" in Fig. 17. This can be varied by taking two or more stitches on each side of the line instead of having just the one single stitch. Represented by "b" and "c" in Fig. 17.

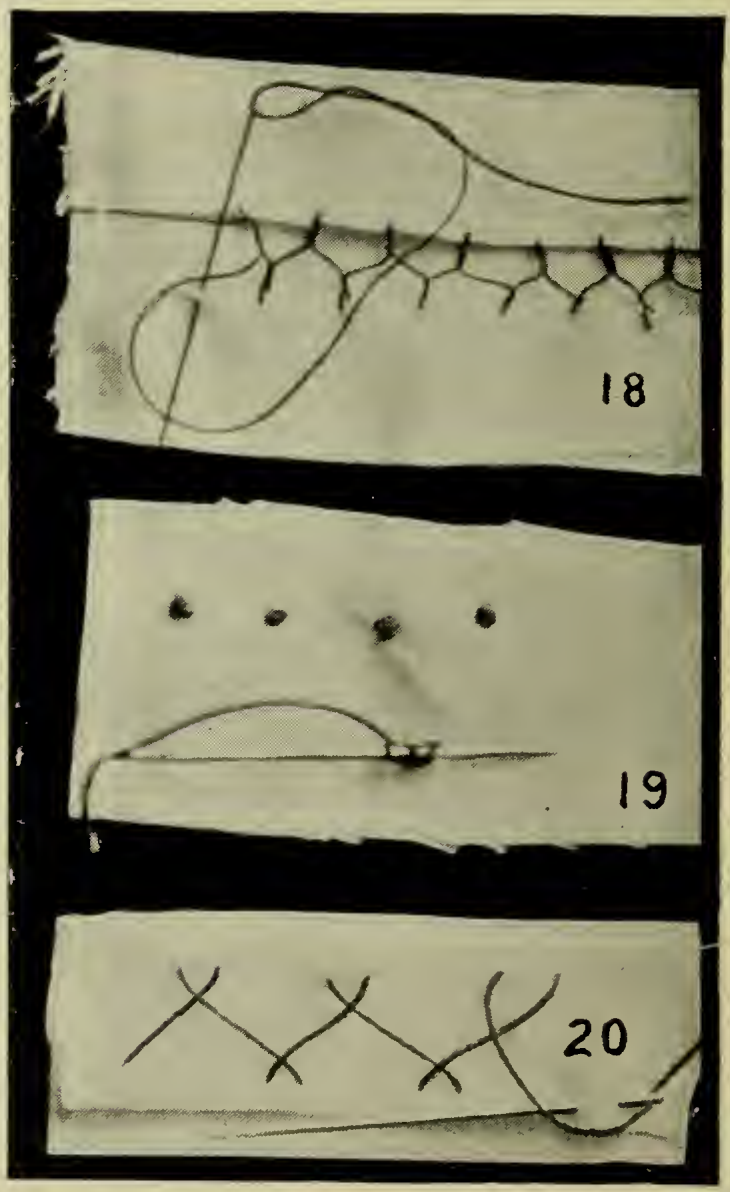
Chain Stitch

Bring your thread up leaving your knot on the wrong side of the goods, take a stitch, loop the thread over the end of the needle toward you, pull your needle out and form the loop. Insert your needle near where your thread was pulled out just inside the loop and take another stitch forward the same as before. Be very careful to keep your stitches even so that the loops will be the same length. This is represented by "d" in Fig. 17.

Faggot Stitch

Fig. 18 represents faggot stitching. This stitch is used for ornamenting and is very pretty for connecting ribbons or folds to form collars, yokes, etc. First baste your folds or ribbon down on to a lining, putting them the distance apart that you want the width of the fag-

got stitching. The faggot stitch itself is similar to the feather stitch and is worked in the same manner except that you put the needle under the fold and take a short stitch out from the center instead of toward the center



and draw your thread down so that it forms the twist and then go to the next stitch. Be careful not to draw the thread too tight.

French Knots

French Knots are used for ornamenting garments. They are represented in Fig. 19 and are made by drawing the needle through the upper side of the cloth. Hold the needle in the right hand and with the left hand take hold of the silk near the cloth and twist it two or three times around the needle. Then put the point of the needle through the cloth again close to the point where it was brought out. Draw the twisted silk close around it and push the needle through. Hold the twist close to the goods with the left hand while you draw the length of silk through so that it will not uncoil. When the silk is drawn through it holds the knot in place. The size of the knot depends on the number of times you wind the silk around the needle and also upon the size of the silk used.

Cat Stitch

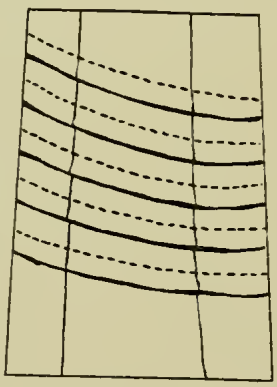
Fig. 20 represents cat-stitching and is formed by bringing your thread up from below, leaving the knot on the under side of material, at the point nearest you, slant the silk across to the opposite side and take a short stitch from right to left, having your needle point away from the thread, draw the needle out and take another slanting stitch. With the same slant cross the silk to the other side and proceed as before.

Folds

To make a fold cut a piece of cloth twice the width of the fold, overcast the raw edges together and then press the fold flat, having the over casting run down the center of the under side of the fold. If a bias fold is desired, be sure and cut the goods on the TRUE bias.

Tucks

Tucks are made by folding the cloth straight and basting the required width and then putting them in with a running stitch. The principal thing in tucking is to make the tucks even. When making tucks in clusters, make an uneven number; for instance, five, seven or nine instead of four, six or eight. This figure represents tucks in a seven-gored skirt. Have the running stitches very small. Tucks can be any size desired. A long stitch may be used for basting as it makes a better guide. Whenever tucking on thick material the running is made on the under side. After the first tuck is creased in it can be used as a guide for the other tucks. The width between the tucks may be governed by your own individual taste.



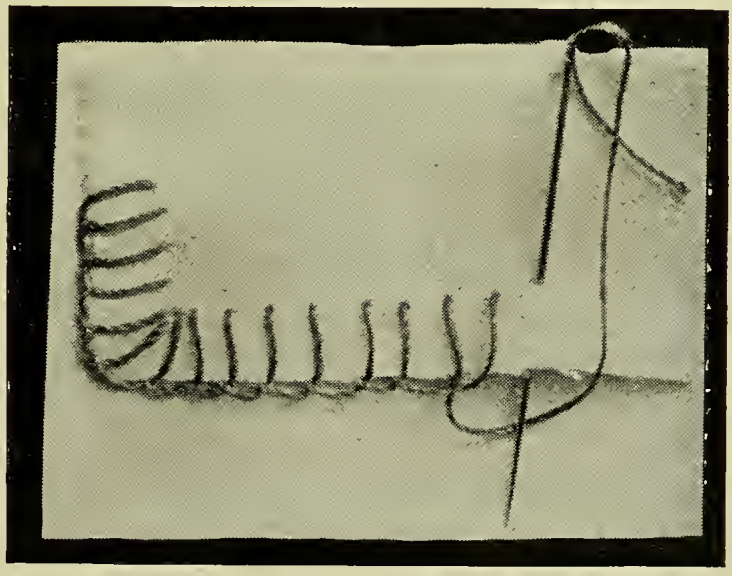
Gathering

Gathering is used when the material is required to fill a small space. It is made by a line of running stitches

and the thread drawn so as to gather the material into the required space. Keep the stitches even in gathering. If you do not want very much fulness USE VERY SMALL STITCHES and if you want more fulness use a LONGER STITCH. Gathering is joined to plain surface by a running stitch if it is not necessary to have it very firm; back-stitching and over-handing if firmness is desired. Where there is a lot of fulness, and especially in wiry goods, put two rows of gathering one right under the other, as otherwise it is hard to keep the gathering in place. This is called gaging.

Blanket Stitch

This figure represents a blanket stitch; it is used to



secure and ornament the edge of woolen material. Have the edge of the material trimmed off evenly. Start the

stitch by taking two or three stitches along the edge so that when you come around to this place again they will be covered with the blanket stitch. Hold the edge of the material towards you and work from left to right. Insert the needle the depth you want your blanket stitch. Draw the needle down and over the thread being very careful to let the thread lie loosely over the edge of the material. To fasten the thread off at the wrong side take a few small running stitches down under the last blanket stitch, carrying the needle through to the wrong side and catch the thread. Use coarse silk or thread for this stitch.

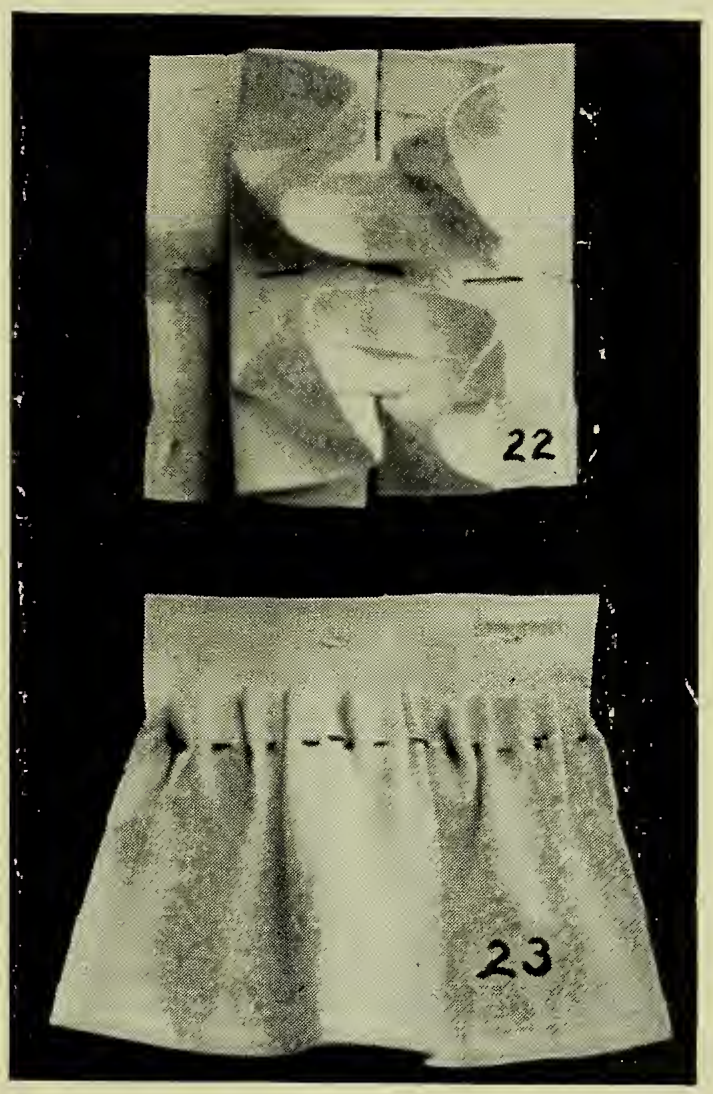
Ruffles and Ruching

In making ruffles and ruchiugs always be careful to cut the material even as nothing has such an untidy appearance as an uneven ruffle or ruching. If you are making them on the bias be sure and cut them on the TRUE bias.

Double Box Pleated Ruching

FIG. 22 represents a double box pleated ruching. To make this ruching, first of all hem it on both sides with a rolled hem. This is similar to a box pleat (See Fig. 25) but as there are two pleats instead of one we cannot baste it in the same way, but each pleat has to be basted individually. First of all decide how wide you are going to have your box pleat and then crease the first pleat ONE-HALF THE WIDTH OF THE BOX PLEAT basting that

down, now crease another pleat right on top of this pleat basting it down. This last pleat will form the box pleat. Now crease the other side the same as the first



side basting them down as you go along. After you have them all basted sew through the center with a run-

ning stitch. Take the basting out, press and sew on to the plain surface. If it is stiff material just open up the box pleats and crease back the same as in the figure. If it is very fine material and will not stay down just catch it with a few overhand stitches. Be careful not to let the overhand stitches show.

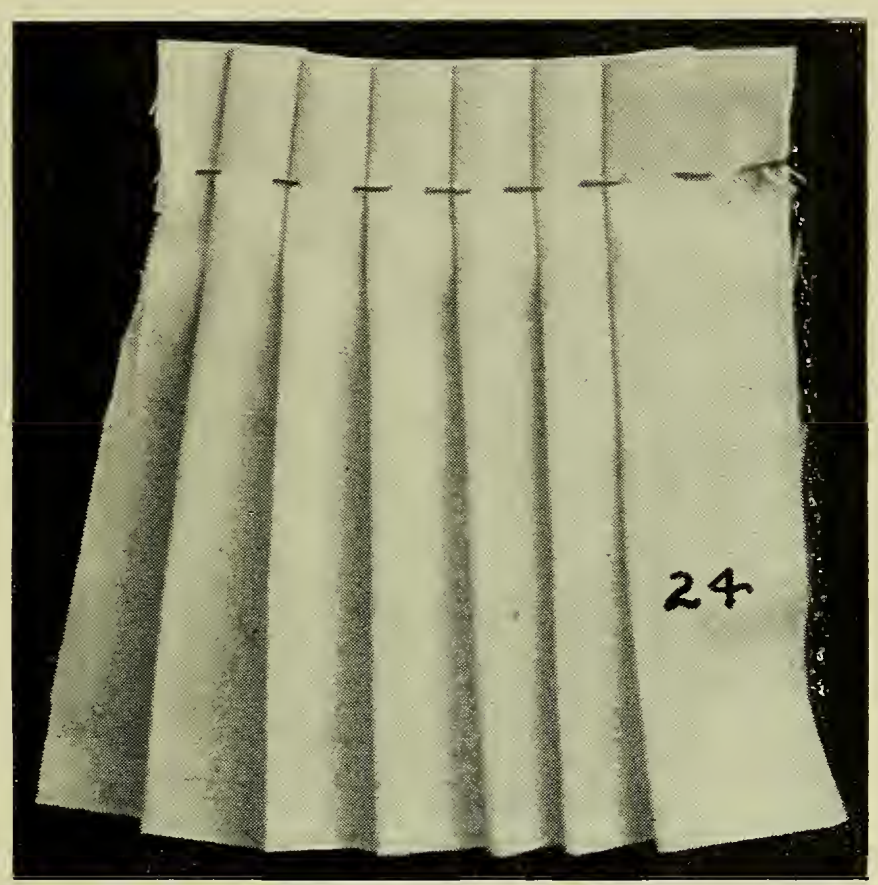
Gathered Ruffle

FIG. 23 represents a gathered ruffle put on to a plain surface. This is a very narrow ruffle about an inch and a quarter wide, with a heading. Before you commence gathering crease the heading, making it about one quarter inch deep. When gathering a heading always hold the right side toward you. Never make a bias ruffle as full as a straight. This ruffle can be made with a raw edge and bound and also by hemming both sides with a rolled hem and gathering, allowing for the heading. This ruffle can also be used for ruching by gathering in the center. In putting ruffles on skirts, before you begin your gathering, divide your ruffle into halves, quarters or eighths. Then divide your skirt into halves, quarters or eighths the same as your ruffle, fitting the division of the ruffle into the same division of the skirt, so as to keep the gathering even. The length of thread is just a little longer than the length of each section that the ruffle is put on.

Knife Pleated Ruffle

FIG. 24 represents a knife pleated ruffle. This ruffle is made by first hemming the goods and then creasing the

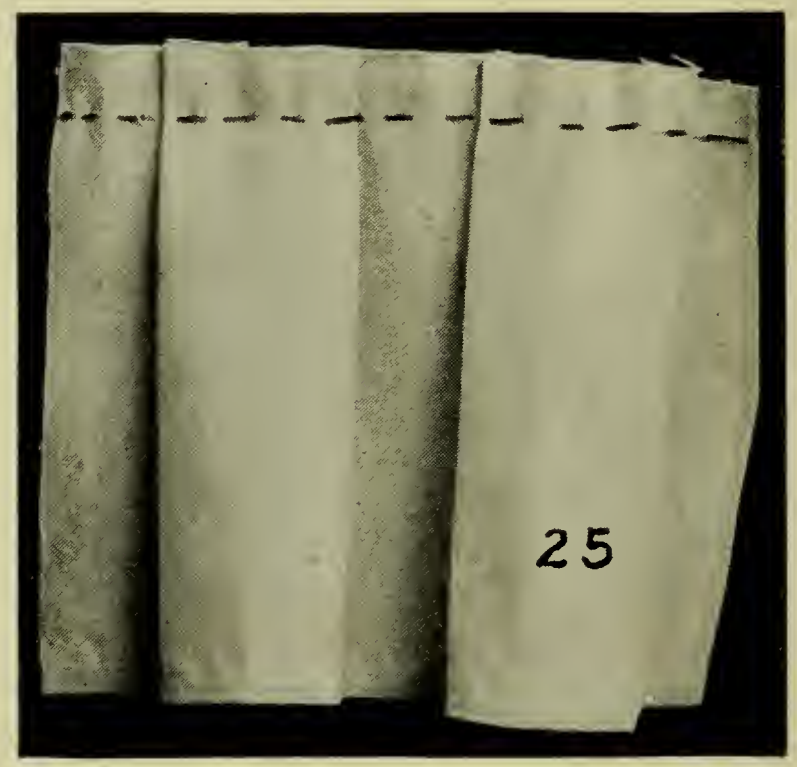
folds in, the under side of each fold being even with the outside fold of the previous one. Keep them even; the top can be either finished off with a heading or by binding.



Box Pleated Ruffle

FIG. 25 represents box a pleated ruffle. To make this ruffle, first hem it, then baste a deep fold or tuck the depth of the width of your box pleat and press the fold open having the center of the fold the center of the box pleat. Baste each one the same way until you have

finished your ruffle. The space between the box pleats may be governed by your own taste. Box pleats can be used in many other ways, such as in shirt waists, skirts, etc.



Shirring

Shirring is similar to gathering. Do it on the same order.

Shirring with Tucks

FIG. 26 is very effective and very easy to do. It is done simply by taking a tuck before you begin to do the

shirring. This tuck in the illustration is ½-inch wide. Do not have them any wider as if you do they will not stand out well. ¼-inch makes a nice width.

FIG. 26

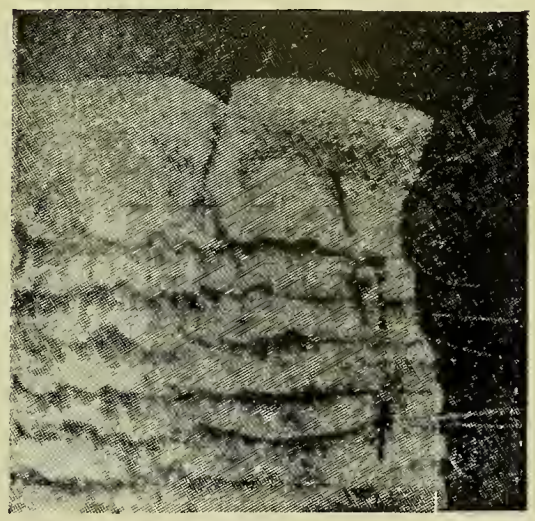


FIG. 27

Flat Tucked Shirring

FIG. 27 is very pretty for a dainty waist made out of

soft material. This is made by creasing the tucks exactly as if they were not going to be shirred. Lay them flat. Here the space between the tucks is just the width of the tucks. They can be placed closer together but it makes a very heavy effect. After each tuck is creased it can be gathered with very small stitches, but do not draw them up until all are done.

Cording

FIG. 28 presents a very smart appearance and can be used in any soft material and even in very inexpensive

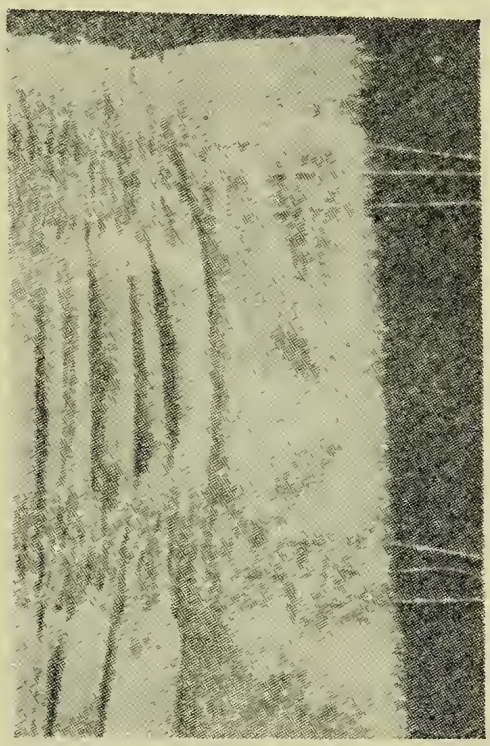
FIG. 28

material. This can be varied by putting in different sizes of cord and also by changing the grouping. Where the rows are placed closely together a finer cord is better.

Plain Shirring

FIG. 29 is plain shirring done in groups with three rows of shirring in each group. This can be used in all manner of different ways only remember that the odd numbers are always prettier than the even. In shirring make all your stitches small and keep them even.

FIG. 29



Smocking

Smocking is used in numerous ways and sizes for ornamentation. Always use unfigured material for smocking as figured does not have a pretty effect. Use all

manner of soft materials. China silk is the most effective. Fig. 30 represents how to mark for smocking. These dots are one-half inch apart both ways. The most important thing in smocking is to do your marking evenly. Mark your dots with a lead pencil but if the material will not take this marking use thread. After the material has been marked the process of sewing comes next.

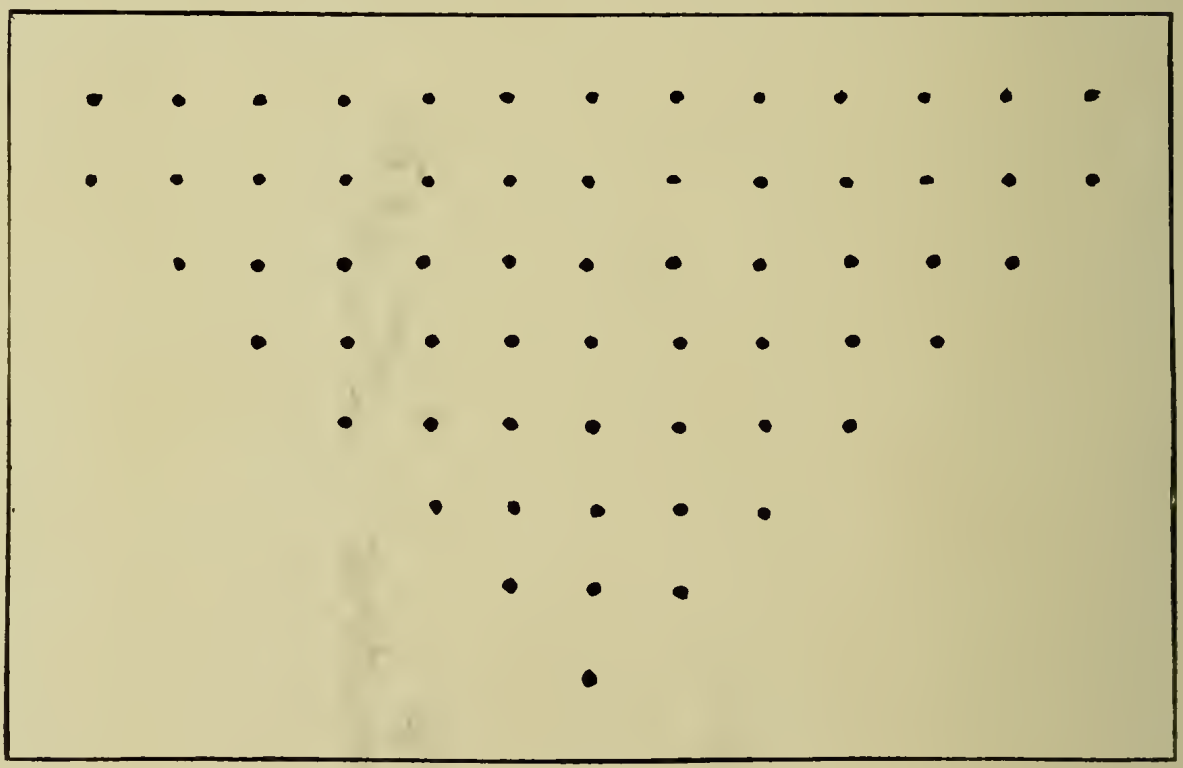


FIG. 30

To do this start at the top catching the first two dots together with three close overhand stitches, one right on top of the other, skip one space and sew the next two dots together in exactly the same manner. Put the needle through so that you can carry the thread along on the under side to the second dot and then

continue to the end of the row. Now start at the second row and do this in just the same way only jump the first dot and join the second and third in starting

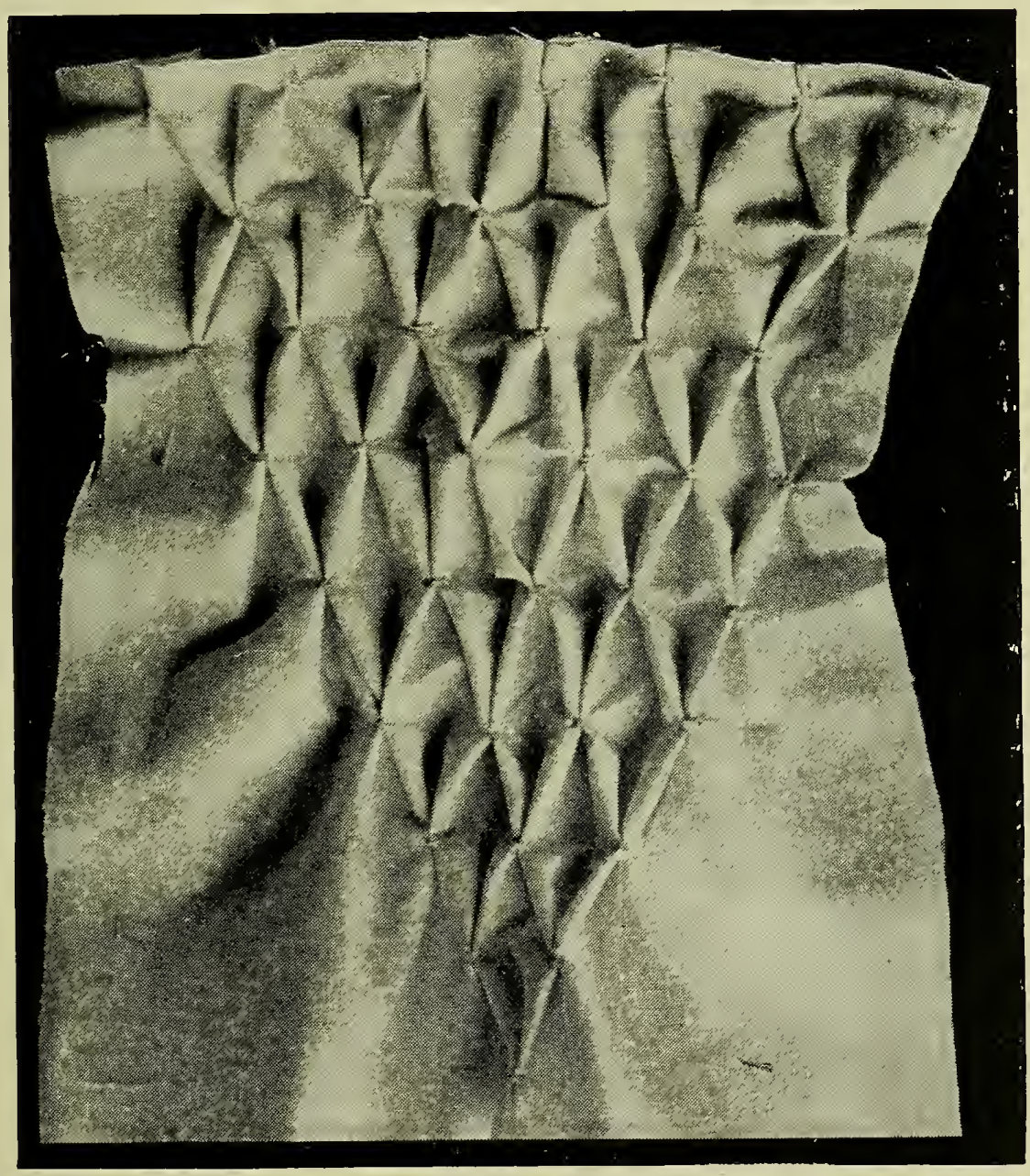


FIG 31

the row instead of the first and second. In this way it forms the diamond. If you want your diamond to be larger when marking, make the space between the dots a little bit wider and if you want your diamonds longer, but still the same width, just make the space between the rows wider. Fig. 31 represents the smocking when it is finshed for this marking. If you do not want the smocking to form a point, when marking carry the dotted lines all the same length, instead of to a point. There are a great many different figures that can be formed in smocking and if you are careful in marking you can make almost any style or size of smocking that you desire.

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